

CHRISTIAN ROCKERS AND SECULAR ROCKERS UNITED

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Ever since we first began warning about Christian rock decades ago, we have observed that there is no separation between Christian rock and secular rock. Contemporary Christian musicians make no attempt to hide this fact and they have no shame for it. When asked in interviews about their musical influences and their favorite music, invariably they list a number of raunchy secular rock musicians.

The following examples could be multiplied endlessly:

FOURTH WATCH cites groups like U2, the Police, Genesis, Pete Townshend, and the Alarm as major influences. “MEMBERS LISTEN TO A GREAT DEAL OF MAINSTREAM MUSIC, MAKING NO APOLOGIES FOR IT, and they express a desire to play clubs and other non-church settings” (*CCM Magazine*, April 1987, p. 19).

RANDY STONEHILL “listens to all kinds of music,” including hard secular rock (Devlin Donaldson, “Rockin’ Randy,” *CCM Magazine*, August 1983).

PHIL KEAGGY performs an unholy combination of secular rock and Christian rock/folk, and those who listen to his music are drawn toward worldly rock & roll. On his 1993 *Crimson and Blue* album, for example, he pays “homage to the Beatles” by covering several of their songs.

When ASHLEY CLEVELAND was asked what music was on her stereo, she replied, “*Living With Ghosts*, Patty Griffin; *What’s The Story Morning Glory*, Oasis; *Exile On Main Street*, the Rolling Stones” (<http://www.ashleycleveland.com/acfacts.htm>). In her concerts, Ashley performs a very gritty rendition of the Rolling Stones hit “Gimme Shelter.”

CAEDMON’S CALL said their greatest love in music is secular rock. They mentioned Indigo Girls, Shawn Colvin, David Wilcox, The Police, Fishbone, 10,000 Maniacs (*Lighthouse Electronic Magazine*). The group often performs Beatles music. Cliff Young said one of his favorites is the foul-mouthed Alanis Morissette. He mocked a preacher who warns that Christian musicians should not listen to secular rock and said that he listens to secular rock & rollers because “they are being honest [about] struggles that they go through.”

AUDIO ADRENALINE’S *Bloom* album includes the song “Free Ride” from the Edgar Winter Group’s *They Only Come out at Night* album. Rock star Edgar Winter was featured on the cover of this wicked album dressed as a homosexual “drag queen.” The lyrics to “Free Ride” claim that

“all of the answers come from within.” This is rank heresy, because we know that the answers do not come from within man’s fallen heart, but from God’s revelation in the Bible.

STEVE CAMP says, “I’ll have a Foreigner 4 album going in my car.” He also says: “I am dedicated to good music whether it’s pop, Christian, gospel, R&B, blues, jazz, classical, rock or whatever. I just love good music” (Steve Camp, *MusicLine* magazine, Feb. 1986, p. 22).

JARS OF CLAY names Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles as their inspiration (Dann Denny, “Christian Rock,” *Sunday Herald Times*, Bloomington, Ind., Feb. 8, 1998). The lead guitarist for Jars of Clay is said to be a “Beatles fanatic” (*Christian News*, Dec. 8, 1997). When asked by *Christianity Today* to list their musical influences, Jars of Clay members “listed no Christian artists” (*Christianity Today*, Nov. 15, 1999). Jars of Clay performs Ozzy Osbourne’s “Crazy Train” during their concerts. Osbourne is the filthy-mouthed former lead singer for the occultic rock group Black Sabbath.

Dana Key (of DEGARMO & KEY) says that he has been influenced most by B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, and Billy Gibbons (of ZZ Top) (*CCM Magazine*, January 1989, p. 30).

POINT OF GRACE, on their *Life, Love and Other Mysteries* album, recorded “Sing a Song” by the occultic, antichrist rock group Earth, Wind and Fire.

The worldliness of DELIRIOUS is evident in their choice of “musical heroes,” which include “Radiohead, Blur and other big British modern rockers” (*CCM magazine*, July 1999, p. 39).

The group DELIVERANCE performs songs by secular rock groups. Their *What a Joke* album has the song “After Forever” by the vile, blasphemous, pagan rock group Black Sabbath.

When asked what is currently in her CD player, CRYSTAL LEWIS replied: “Michael Jackson, *Thriller*; Billy Holliday; Led Zeppelin; Radiohead, *Ok Computer*; Radiohead, *Kid A*; and Sting, *Nothing Like the Sun* (“Ten Questions with Chrystal Lewis,” *CCM Magazine*, March 2002).

The popular group THIRD DAY also loves secular rock. Michael Herman of *Christianity Today* asked the members of Third Day to “name a musician you’d pay to see in concert.” All five members of the band named secular rockers. Tai named U2; Brad, the Cars; David, Phil Collins; Mac, Tom Petty; and Mark, George Harrison (“Guy Talk” interview posted at *Christianity Today* web site, Feb. 26, 2002). Anyone familiar with the music and atmosphere at secular rock concerts should know that a Bible believer has no business there. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

MERCYME is also in the business of breaking down the walls of separation from the world. In their “Cover Tune Grab Bag” series they sing such things as “Jump” by Van Halen, “Thriller” by Michael Jackson (complete with choreographed Jackson-style dancing), “Crazy” by Outkast, “Ice Ice Baby” by rapper Vanilla Ice, “La Bamba,” “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey, “It’s the

End of the World” by R.E.M., “Dead or Alive” by Bon Jovi, “Hard to Say Goodbye” by Motown, “More Than Words” by Extreme, “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees, “Footloose,” “Eye of the Tiger” by Survivor, “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor, “Hold Me Now” by Thompson Twins, “Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da” and “I Feel Fine” by the Beatles, “More Than Words” by Extreme, and “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” by Cyndi Lauper.

It is obvious that the members of MercyMe fill their minds and hearts with a *lot* of licentious secular rock. They don’t merely listen to some “carefully-selected rock,” they listen to tons of it. The remarks left on their YouTube videos demonstrate MercyMe’s worldly cool influence. “These guys rock! ... awesome ... I wish my parents were as cool as this ... Dude!! ... I get the impression that they like the Beatles. Sweet! ... This is great! And the dancing! Oh my goodness!”

MercyMe is responsible before God for every professing believer that is captured by the demons that led the Beatles, Van Halen, Michael Jackson, and every other godless secular rocker that they promote in “innocent fun.” And so is every other CCM “artist” that encourages the love of secular rock instead of separating from it as God’s Word demands (e.g., Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:11; James 1:227; 1 John 2:15-17). And so is every fundamental Baptist pastor and song leader and youth director who brings these people’s music into the churches.

We have seen that contemporary Christian musicians love secular rock; they listen to it in their private lives and they perform it in their concerts and record it for their albums. In fact, they are so stupid drunk with rock & roll that they even use secular rock in the worship of God.

At the National Promise Keepers Conference in Boulder, Colorado, in 1994, Charles Swindoll entered the stadium on a motorcycle while the worship band played Steppenwolf’s 60s rebel rock anthem “Born to Be Wild.”

The “Heart of David Conference on Worship & Warfare,” sponsored by Rick Joyner’s Morning Star ministries, concluded with the praise team singing the Beatles song “I Want to Hold Your Hand” as if God were singing it to believers. The worship leaders were Leonard Jones, Kevin Prosch, and Suzy Wills. Jones also leads “worship” crowds in a hard-rocking rendition of the Beatles’ “Come Together” as if Jesus were singing it to His people.

In 2002, I received the following note from a professor at Southern Baptist Seminary: “A couple of my students recently attended Rod Parsley’s World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio. They said that the call to worship was a tape playing Van Halen’s ‘Jump!’ Every time David Lee Roth sang, ‘Jump’ the people all jumped.” Van Halen was one of the most popular heavy metal groups of the 1980s and early 1990s. In a concert in Detroit, Michigan, lead singer David Lee Roth yelled out, “We are gathered in celebration of drugs, sex and rock and roll!!!” (*Shofar* magazine, Fall 1983, p. 10). Many of Van Halen’s songs are vile and immoral. A rock critic said a Van Halen concert is “a musical circus of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll cliches” and noted that “sex is

celebrated in a way that makes bike gangs look like morality squads” (*Calgary Herald*, April 28, 1984).

During the February 18, 2002, premier show for the Michael W. Smith/Third Day *Come Together Tour*, the CCM group Third Day took the stage to the strains of the New Age Beatles song “Come Together” (press release, Nashville, April 24, 2002).

In April 2005, Rick Warren sang Jimi Hendrix’s drug-drenched song “Purple Haze” before his congregation on the church’s 25th anniversary, accompanied by his praise and worship band (“Rick Warren Hits Home Run,” AssistNews.net, April 17, 2005).

From its inception rock & roll has had two grand themes: licentiousness (sex, drugs, etc.) and rebellion, and this is nowhere more evident than in the music of Jimi Hendrix. The song “Purple Haze” is from the “Are You Experienced?” album. Consider the lyrics:

“Purple haze all in my brain/ Lately things just don't seem the same/ Actin' funny, but I don't know/ why 'Scuse me while I kiss the sky./ Purple haze all around/ Don't know if I'm comin' up or down/ Am I happy or in misery?/ Whatever it is that girl put a spell on me./ Purple haze all in my eyes/ Don't know if it's day or night,/ You got me blowin', blowin' my mind/ Is it tomorrow, or just the end of time?”

I want to say publicly, Shame on Rick Warren, and shame on his fellow Southern Baptist Convention leaders for not publicly rebuking him for such worldly shenanigans.

NewSpring Church in Florence, South Carolina, performed “Highway to Hell” by the wicked rock band AC/DC for Easter service 2009 and Ozzy Osbourne’s “Crazy Train” in November 2011.

Northpoint Church of Springfield, Missouri, performed “Sympathy for the Devil” by the Rolling Stones for Easter service 2011, and Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” in November 2011.

The Church by the Glades in Miramar, Florida, performed “Calling All the Monsters” in 2011. The theme of the song is “magic and fantasy,” and the immoral dance moves were inspired by Michael Jackson’s “Thriller.”

Fairview Village Church of Eagleville, Pennsylvania, played “Bad to the Bone” for Biker Sunday, June 9, 2012. The lyrics to this sorry piece of music include the line: “I make a rich woman beg/ I’ll make a good woman steal/ I’ll make an old woman blush/ And make a Mississippi girl squeal.”

Why is it that contemporary Christian musicians can be so comfortable with secular rock? I believe it is because so many CCM artists worship a false god.

As a new Christian in 1973, one of the first things that God dealt with me about was my music. I could see from my daily Bible reading that rock music is wrong. It is the very definition of the “world” that we are not to love as described in 1 John 2:15-17.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Rock music is clearly characterized by “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.” A better definition has never been written.

James warned that it is spiritual adultery to love the world and God, too.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Therefore, I knew that I had a clear choice. I could love rock or I could love God, but I could not love both, and if I held on to my love for filthy secular rock I would be committing spiritual adultery against the thrice holy God who saved me.

I loved rock & roll, but I loved the Lord more. Furthermore, I had already drunk deeply of the cup of rock & roll and I yearned for a new path in life. I wanted a new song. I wanted to be set free from the old way, so I gave up rock & roll. I have been tempted to go back on that decision from time to time, but by God’s grace I have never done so and I have never regretted it. The older I get in the Lord, the clearer it becomes to me that rock & roll is of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and it has no part whatsoever in the life of a born again child of God.

One reason why contemporary Christian music lovers do not separate from rock & roll is that they worship the same god as secular rockers.

It is the god that is experienced through sensual passions.

As we have seen, rock & rollers can be religiously passionate about their music and they often speak of it in terms of a spiritual experience.

The Doors wanted their audience “to undergo a religious experience.”

Bob Marley’s concerns were “like church ... a spiritual high.”

Grateful Dead concerts are “a place to worship” and “bear uncanny resemblance to religious festivals.”

Muddy Waters said that “blues was his religion.”

Judas Priest said that rock music isn’t just music; it’s “a philosophy and a way of life.”

Michael Jackson said, “When I am dancing, I have felt touched by something sacred.”

George Harrison said, “Music is very involved with the spiritual.”

Brian Eno described his discovery of rock & roll as “a spiritual experience.”

Obviously, these rockers are not talking about having communion with the God of the Bible. They worship a different god. He is non-judgmental, sensual, even sexual, and puts no obligations on people, letting them “follow their hearts.”

This is exactly the god worshiped by many CCM artists.

Consider the popularity of *The Shack*. It has been directly endorsed by Michael W. Smith and other CCM artists and has been well received in prominent CCM circles such as Calvary Chapels, Vineyard churches, and Hillsong. It was promoted at the 2009 National Pastor’s Convention in San Diego, which was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Fellowship. Young was one of the speakers and a survey found that 57% had read the novel. Young was enthusiastically received, and in an interview with Andy Crouch, a senior editor of *Christianity Today*, there was not a hint of condemnation for his false god. Crouch is a CCM musician in his own right and led one of the praise and worship sessions in San Diego.

The Shack is all about redefining God. It is about a man who becomes bitter at God after his daughter is murdered and has a life-changing experience in the very shack where the murder occurred; but the God he encounters is most definitely *not* the God of the Bible.

Young says the book is for those with “a longing that God is as kind and loving as we wish he was” (interview with Sherman Hu, Dec. 4, 2007). What he is referring to is the desire on the part of the natural man for a God who loves “unconditionally” and does not require obedience, does not require repentance, does not judge sin, and does not make men feel guilty for what they do.

In that same interview, Young said that a woman wrote to him and said that her 22-year-old daughter came to her after reading the book and asked, “IS IT ALRIGHT IF I DIVORCE THE OLD GOD AND MARRY THE NEW ONE?”

This is precisely what a very large portion of the Contemporary Christian Music crowd is doing.

Young admits that the God of “The Shack” is different from the traditional God of Bible-believing Christianity and blasphemously says that the God who “watches from a distance and judges sin” is “a Christianized version of Zeus.”

This reminds me of the modernist G. Bromley Oxnam, who called the God of the Old Testament “a dirty bully” in his 1944 book *Preaching in a Revolutionary Age*.

Young depicts the triune God as a young Asian woman named “Sarayu” * (supposedly the Holy Spirit), an oriental carpenter who loves to have a good time (supposedly Jesus), and an older black woman named “Elousia” (supposedly God the Father). (* The name “Sarayu” is from the

Hindu scriptures and represents a mythical river in India on the shores of which the Hindu god Rama was born.)

Young's god is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require repentance and the new birth, and puts no obligations on people. (See "The Shack's Cool God" at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

The false CCM non-judgmental, universalistic god is represented by emerging church leaders such as Brian McLaren and Rob Bell, both of whom are very popular with CCM artists. One Christian rocker told us that these writings "resonate" with him.

McLaren calls the God who punished Jesus on the cross for man's sin "a God who is incapable of forgiving, unless he kicks somebody else" (McLaren, <http://www.understandthetimes.org/mclarentrans.shtml> and http://str.typepad.com/weblog/2006/01/brian_mclaren_p.html). He presents the traditional God of the Bible as a tyrant who "gets his way through coercion and violence and intimidation and domination. McLaren says that the "power of the blood" gospel "raises some questions about the goodness of God."

Rob Bell, author of the influential book *Velvet Elvis*, claims that the God who would allow multitudes to go to eternal hell is not great or mighty (*Love Wins*, Kindle location 1189-1229). He says that such God is not loving and calls the preaching of eternal hell "misguided and toxic." He says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him "terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable" (*Love Wins*, location 47-60, 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell "we could contact child protection services immediately" (*Love Wins*, location 2085-2098).

One of Bell's supporters, Chad Hotlz, a Methodist pastor, calls the God who sends unbelievers to hell "the monster God" ("Who's in Hell?" *FoxNews*, March 24, 2011).

It is obvious that Bell and company worship a different God than the One we worship in "traditional" Baptist churches.

The "old-fashioned" Bible believer says with the writer of Hebrews, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). The emerging church says, "Our God is *not* a consuming fire."

Bell's God is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as "a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events" (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724).

"There is an energy in the world, a spark, an electricity that everything is plugged into. The Greeks called it zoe, the mystics call it 'Spirit,' and Obi-Wan called it 'the Force'" (*Love Wins*, location 1749-1762).

Many of the CCM artists worship **A REBEL CHRIST**, which is certainly a false christ. Mark Stuart of Audio Adrenaline says, "Jesus Christ is the biggest rebel to ever walk the face of the earth" (*Pensacola News Journal*, Pensacola, Fla., March 1, 1998, pp. 1, 6E). Sonny of P.O.D. says, "We believe that Jesus was the first rebel; the first punk rocker" (<http://www.shoutweb.com/interviews/pod0700.phtml>). This is absolute blasphemy. The Bible says rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23). A rebel is a lawbreaker, but Christ was the lawgiver who He came to earth to fulfill the requirements of His own law (Mat. 5:17-19). Christ was not crucified for rebellion; He was crucified for testifying that He is God (John 10:33).

Many of the CCM artists worship **A ROCK & ROLL PARTY CHRIST**. In his *Live ... Radically Saved* video Carman says, "Jesus is always cool; He's got his thing together." In *Resurrection Rap* Carman portrays Jesus as a street hippie; in *The Standard* he calls Jesus "J.C."; and in *Addicted to Jesus* he speaks of "Jammin' with the Lamb." Petra claims that "God gave rock and roll to you/ Put it in the soul of every one." In "Party in Heaven" the Daniel Band sang, "The Lamb and I are drinkin' new wine." Phil Driscoll says, "God is the King of Soul; He's the King of all rhythm" (quoted by Tim Fisher, *Battle for Christian Music*, p. 82). Messiah Prophet Band says, "Jesus is the Master of Metal," and Barren Cross says, "Better than pot, Jesus rocks." John Fischer described God as puffing on a cigar and swaying to rock music (*CCM Magazine*, July 1984, p. 20), while J. Lee Grady says Jesus enjoys dancing with the angels and "grooving to the sound of Christian R&B pumped out of a boom box" (*Charisma*, July 2000).

The fact that the CCM crowd typically worships a different kind of God than the "old-fashioned" Biblicist, is why they are perfectly comfortable using music that has been identified as sexy by the secular world.

"... that is what rock is all about--sex with a 100-megaton bomb, the beat" (Gene Simmons of KISS, *Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, Dec. 10, 1987).

Note that Simmons was not referring to the words of rock music; he was referring to the music itself and particularly to its backbeat rhythm.

Music researchers Daniel and Bernadette Skubik, in their study on the neurophysiology of rock music, warned:

"Whether the words are evil, innocuous, or based in Holy Scripture, the overall neurophysiological effects generated by rock music remain the same. There is simply no such thing as Christian rock that is substantively different in its impact" ("The Neurophysiology of Rock," an Appendix to Ken Blanchard's *Pop Goes the Gospel*, pp. 187ff).

The reason this statement doesn't bother a CCM defender is because he sees Jesus as a non-judgmental rock & roll party Dude who loves a good time.

"Those who envision God as a special friend, a kind of lover, with whom they can have fun, see no problem in worshipping him by means of physically stimulating music. On the other hand, those who perceive God as a majestic, holy, and almighty Being to be approached with awe and

reverence will only use the music that elevates them spiritually" (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Christian and Rock Music*).

They are worshipping a different god.

CONCLUSION

It is the rock music itself that creates the passion on the part of secular rockers and Christian rockers.

Both are carried away in "worship" during a rock concert.

Contemporary Christian Worship music is all about an experience with God, and that experience is produced by the various elements of the music itself -- the highly-physical, highly-addictive dance syncopation, the unresolving chords that play with the emotions, the sensual vocal techniques, the rise and fall of the sound, the repetition.

Secular rockers have "worshiped" to the rock experience since the 1950s.

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